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An Attempt of Interpreting Some Dutch Genre Paintings as a Variation of *De Hollandse Tuin* and *De Hollandse Maagd*

Yoriko Kobayashi-Sato

1. Dutch Genre Paintings of the Seventeenth Century

Genre paintings depicting scenes of everyday life seriously began to be executed in Holland from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their sub-genres mainly consist of paintings representing scenes with peasants, maidservants, and shopkeepers from the working class, and citizens from the middle or higher class who were all deeply absorbed in their matters of concern, amusing themselves and conversing with each other (fig. 1).[1] Their origin could be traced back to the background scenes or auxiliary details of some religious paintings such as the annunciation, Christ in the house of Mary and Martha, and the brothel scenes with the prodigal son as well as the last supper or the supper at the house of Simon, to name just a few.[2]

In the Dutch Republic which had newly got independent as a protestant and pre-modern civic nation at the end of the sixteenth century, painters could expect few orders of religious paintings from churches. Nor was that all. They almost lost chances to produce large-size history paintings which had used to be requested by aristocratic layers, though with some exceptions. The greater part of demands now came from the new rich citizens whose pictorial interest was turned to the paintings of secular subject matter such as portrait, landscape, still life, and everyday scenes, where the daily life of

Fig. 1 Gerbrard van den Eeckhout, *A Party on the Terrace*, 1652, oil on canvas, 54 x 64 cm, The Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, USA.

Fig. 2 Essaias van de Velde, *Elegant Party in the Open Air*, 1615, oil on canvas, 34.7 x 60.7 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

the ordinary people was replicated in some form or other. Among them, this paper is chiefly focused on the last ones, especially with the scenes of young citizens.

The genre scenes with young citizens making merry firstly used to be set in a neatly arranged garden: a number of probably yet single women and men from the wealthier class, being sumptuously dressed, were courting with each other around the feast spreading upon a long table (fig. 2).[3] They could partly derive from an iconography, the garden of love, which had originally begun around the end of the Middle Ages. The scenes with a fountain among them were particularly deeply related to the iconography. Sometimes a dense foliage was added to their background. These works could be grouped into the in-between field of genre- and landscape paintings. David Vinckboons (1576–1632), one of the precursors of Northern landscape painting, represented this tendency above all. Around the 1620s and 1630s, young adults from the middle-class gradually replaced those from the higher class (fig. 3) in these genre paintings, moving their stage from the open air places into the interiors, and amusing themselves by performing music and dancing, drinking and eating, and enjoying an amorous atmosphere. Pieter de Codde (1599–1678) and Palamedes Palamedesz (1607–1638) represent this phase. The situation depicted is sometimes strikingly similar to the scene of the parable of the prodigal son and often covertly refers to a moral warning. These genre paintings successively produced reflected an affluent life made possible by the economic success which the first generation of the Dutch Republic had brought about during the first two decades of the seventeenth century, and gradually spread into the various layers of the Dutch society.[4]

However, the smooth sailing of the newly born Dutch Republic was disrupted in 1652, when the confrontation between Holland and England got greatly critical and the Anglo-Dutch war broke out.[5] Earlier than the war, Holland had experienced an unparalleled success of economy inside as well as outside Europe. After the Geuzen had blockaded the mouth of the Meuse in 1585, any ship had not been able to

Fig. 3 Palamedes Palamedesz., *Merry Company Dining and Making Music*, 1632, oil on panel, 47.4 x 72.6 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

touch Antwerp, the most significant port city at the time, anymore. Amsterdam had immediately replaced it and highly prospered as the metropolitan transit port between the Baltic Sea and the other places. The other Dutch port cities, faced to the North Sea had developed with great vigor, too. The Dutch East and West India Company (VOC and VWC), which had been organized by the Dutch as a chartered company in 1602 and 1621, respectively, to collect overseas interests on a large scale, had seized the trading posts of the Portuguese in the East Indies, and constructed in the Americas bases to explore further territory and fortune. On the contrary, England had then been busy to overcome the domestic conflicts and just looked on idly at the remarkable development of the Dutch Republic. However, in 1649, it established the republic state at last, and began to turn its eyes to the outer world bit by bit and challenge the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic, especially over the sea.

The battle between the two countries continued for two years and ended up with Holland losing the war. Holland was forced to accept the act of navigation which excluded Dutch ships from transporting the goods which were carried to and from England and its colonies. Furthermore, the province of Holland promised England in secrecy to seclude the Willem III (1650–1702), the son of Willem II (1626–1650), from the office of the stadholder. For the first time since its virtual independence in 1588 from the Hapsburger Spain, the Dutch Republic suffered from financial difficulties for some years thereafter. As it is well known, one of their most known victims was Rembrandt (1606–1669), who went bankrupt mostly under the influence of this economic depression. Fortunately, Johan de Wit (1625–1672), an excellent statesman, became responsible for managing the nation which had been tired of the war and soon recovered its economic prosperity successfully through reorganizing its financial framework.

The policy of de Wit greatly contributed to the birth of a new type of genre paintings, because it benefitted the middle-class citizens, who were none other

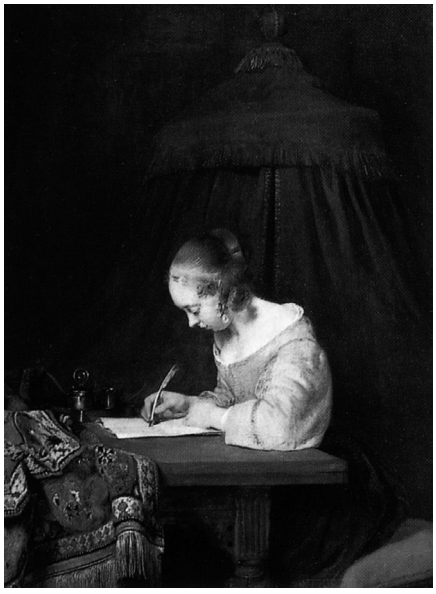

Fig. 4 Gerard ter Borch, *Woman Writing a Letter,* ca. 1655, oil on wood, 38 x 29 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

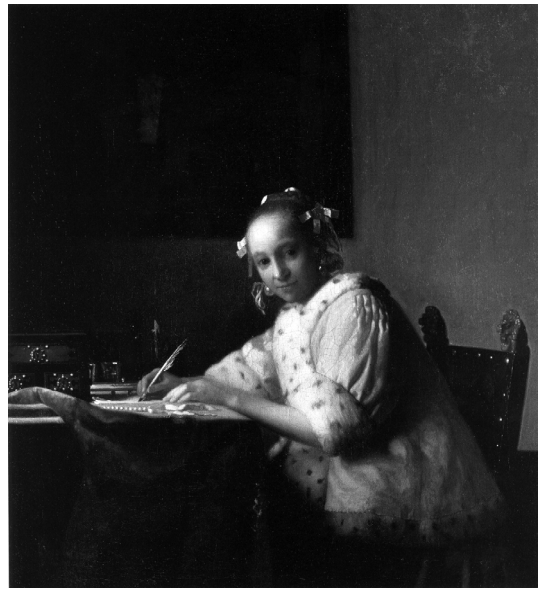

Fig. 5 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Writing a Letter*, ca. 1665–1666, oil on canvas, 45 x 39.9 cm, National Gallery, Washington.

than their primary purchasers.[6] Many genre painters cleverly replied to their eager demand for images reflecting their decent daily life. In those images (fig. 4) are usually represented one or two elegant young ladies in a closed private space, with household implements showing off her/ their affluent life; what is emphasized is the private domestic activities of the depicted persons who display their luxurious costume made of satin cloth and pearl necklace, brilliantly reflecting the light coming from a large window, and stand or sit in a gracefully arranged room with musical instruments or Chinese vases on the table, or with paintings or maps hanging on the wall. Their closed-up compositions are reminiscent of those of Utrecht Caravaggisti of the 1620s, which had, though, featured crude figures and lacked in the opulent details mentioned above. Painters like Gerard ter Borch (1617–1681) (fig. 4), Gabriel Metsu (1629–1667), Pieter de Hooch (1629–1684) (fig. 16), Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) (figs. 5 and 18), and Frans van Mieris (1635–1681) (fig. 6) satisfied the demand for this new type of genre paintings by applying their highly painstaking and sophisticated pictorial technique.[7] Their compositions are sometimes very much alike to each other. There should have existed a tendency in the then art market to recycle the popular ones to find purchasers easily and quickly (figs. 4–6).

If we understand those genre paintings thus in the light of contemporary political, economic and social framework, one more point should not be overlooked: to put and interpret some among them within a historical context of the national crisis that the Dutch Republic was undergoing at the time. Even after the treaty of Westminster had concluded the first Anglo-Dutch War, the Republic was not completely relieved of the political power game with the surrounding countries, but still exposed to their menace: the second Anglo-Dutch War began about ten years later in 1665–1667; France gradually reinforced the national power, got launched on the Wars of Devolution in 1667 with Flanders, and would place some of the Flemish cities under its control; the

Fig. 6 Frans van Mieris, *A Girl Stringing Pearls*, 1658, 77.47 x 41.91 cm, oil on panel, Museum Fabre, Montpellier.

Republic neighboring to Flanders was so frightened by this French diplomatic strategy and concluded in 1668 the Triple Alliance with Sweden and England, with the latter of which it had fought as an enemy until just before it. Incidentally, this fear was not utterly groundless, because France marched its troops onto the Dutch territory only four years thereafter and seriously damaged the Republic. Its safety and prosperity could not have been kept without careful and deliberate eyes being continuously turned to the European political situation.[8] It was therefore no wonder that the benefitters of Johan de Wit's policy, that is, the purchasers of the new type of genre paintings picturing the welfare of the Republic, would have wanted their patriotic spirit to be imprinted on and propagated in those paintings.

With this view in mind, I will hereafter present a new possible interpretation of some Dutch genre paintings produced around 1660s: a political claim would be disguised in the domestic scenes with middle-class women.

2. *De Hollandse Tuin*

The clue to my interpretation is found in a traditional Dutch iconography, *De Hollandse Tuin*, or *The Dutch Garden*, through which the Dutch had incessantly expressed the patriotic spirit until around the end of the nineteenth century. It generally consists of motifs such as a closed garden and a lion sitting in its center, surrounded by a hedge woven with willow branches (fig. 7).[9] The garden symbolizes the territory of Holland and the hedge surrounding it assures its safety, closing it against the menace coming from the outside world. The lion, which has been used since the twelfth century as the heraldic animal, firstly by the Southern Netherlands, and then by all of the Netherlands, is called *De Hollandse Leeuw*, or *The Dutch Lion*. It usually stands up on its hind legs,

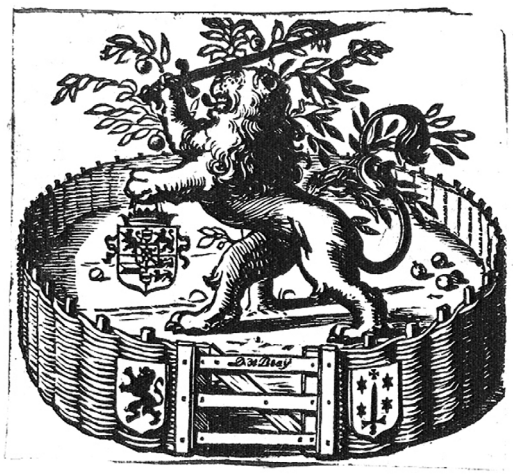

Fig. 7 Dirck de Brij, *The Dutch Lion in the Dutch Garden*, 7.5 x 8 cm, woodblock print, National Gevangenismuseum, The Hague.

Fig. 8 Anonymous, *The Dutch Lion*, 1621–1663, originally at the Ammunitionhouse of the Admiralty of the Meuse, Rotterdam, Historisch Museum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 9 Philips Galle, *The Dutch Maiden in the Dutch Garden*, 1600 (design is from 1563), engraving, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp.

Fig. 10 Anonymous, *The Dutch Maiden and the Dutch Lion in the Dutch Garden*, after 1600, engraving, National Gevangenismuseum, The Hague.

Fig. 11 'The Virgin and the Unicorn' from *Book of Hours*, Netherlands, Utrecht, ca. 1500, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

and sometimes holds in one of its forefeet seven arrows (fig. 8), which are not only his weapons as the guardian of *The Dutch Garden*, but also denote the solidarity of the seven provinces constituting the Dutch Republic after its independence from Spain. It holds in the other forefoot a sword at other times, often with a spear standing by him, at the top of which *De Vrijheid Hoed*, or *The Freedom Hut* hangs (fig. 12). In some examples, the lion is replaced by a woman, who is called *De Hollandse Maagd*, or *The Dutch Maiden* (fig. 9). Like the goddess Athena who patronized the city Athens, it was expected to guard Holland and embodies its safety. Also a mixed image of the motifs mentioned above prevailed: *The Dutch Maiden* with *The Dutch Lion* leaning on her lap (fig. 10).

The last one must have reminded the then viewer of a long traditional pictorial iconography, *The Virgin and The Unicorn* (fig. 11).[10] A unicorn is an imaginary animal unifying beasts mentioned in various legends. It has been said to be similar to a white deer, with a horn on the middle of his forehead which has a detoxifying effect. Its character is so fierce that nobody could not control it except for a virgin, who would tame it and by whose lap it would quietly sleep.[11] In *Physiologus*, a famous bestiary edited in the second century in Egypt, it is compared to Christ, while the virgin to Mary, and its posture with its head on the virgin's lap to the incarnation. The garden where the virgin and the unicorn are sitting is also related to the biblical closed garden which symbolizes the Virgin Mary.[12] It goes without saying that the composition of *The Virgin and The Unicorn* mostly overlaps with the one of *The Dutch Maiden* with *The Dutch Lion* in *The Dutch Garden*. The viewer of the latter must have associated it to the former and persuaded himself/herself that the righteousness of the Dutch Republic was religiously backed up.

The iconography of *The Dutch Garden* or *The Dutch Woman* is said to originate in a certificate issued by the Count Willem VI of Holland (reign 1404–1417), on which a closed garden was pictured: he sieged Hagestein in 1406 and gave the certificate to the citizens of the city as a deed assuring their right and freedom to some extent. According to another theory, there had been a much older tradition since the early medieval period: if someone had surrounded a piece of land with a rope, nobody could have entered inside it without his or her permission. [13]

What is sure, however, is that this iconography became popular among the Dutch, especially when the hostilities against Spain seriously increased. Holland located in the Northern Netherlands, which had been controlled and plundered by the Catholic Spaniards, rose in rebellion in 1568 and became virtually independent in 1588 after a long violent battle, when the united army of England and Holland destroyed *the Invincible Armada*. The nationalist spirit grew more and more intense among the Dutch before and after this battle, and the iconography of *The Dutch Garden* or *The Dutch Woman* or *The Dutch Lion* interested the Dutch all the more strongly: they often illustrated books and patriotic pamphlets, were minted on some medals and coins, and carved on the gables of some public buildings.[14]

Around 1578–1582, a propaganda print was published (fig. 12). A lion within a hedged space and the first line of the satirical poem attached in the lower part of the print teach us that the iconography of *The Dutch Garden* and *The Dutch Lion* gives a framework to the image.[15] Its copies must have been hung overall in Holland and raised the hostilities of the Dutch against the Spaniards, when the two parties fiercely fought with each other.

A flock of swine is coming up from the sea onto the land and devastating it. Some are greedily eating vegetable on the land, while some are openly copulating. Because one of the swine on the right side holds a flag of the notorious governor of the Netherlands, the Grand Duke of Alva (1507–1582), the swine undoubtedly embody the Spaniards, who sacked the Dutch cities. Three swine are now breaking down the hedge to invade into the garden. But, they will not succeed in it, because the garden is firmly guarded by *The Dutch Lion* standing on his hind legs and holding a spear in its very center. The inscriptions *Oranjen* and *Holant* on the bars of the front entrance and the coat of arms set above them, the emblems and flags of 22 cities whose name is inscribed above them, hanging on the hedge or fluttering in the air, and the freedom hut soaring high in the sky at the top of a vertically standing stick — all suggest that the Orange family would take the leadership of the war against the Spaniards, and would greatly contribute to liberating the cities of Holland.

On the left side, three vessels are floating on the sea, on the side of one of which is inscribed: Vlissingen, Middelburg and Veer, the important cities located in the province of Zeeland, which prospered as the province of Holland and took initiative of the movement toward the liberation from the Spaniards together with it. How they indeed gamely fought is seen in *The Zeeuwish Lion* defeating a swine with his sword on the sea. The geese flying in the sky and perching on the vessels are also busy to help him to fight by pecking, sinking down and hanging from a sail yard the swine-Spaniards.

Although the print mainly highlights the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, it also suggests that *The Dutch Garden* would be expanded and include the other five Dutch provinces, because the coastline of the land clearly represents the form of the future Dutch Republic consisting of the seven provinces.

Fig. 12 Anonymous, *Houdt op in mijn tuin te wroeten Spaens Varken!*, ca.1578–1582, etching, 23.5 x 29.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

The poem inscribed below would roughly be translated as follows: Stop damage my garden, the Spanish swine, go back to your country, otherwise my geese soldiers stop it, then your head or your neck shall break, the noble prince shall attack you on the sea and land, go away with your dirty sows and piglets, otherwise the geese will force you to do so.[16] The French verses written on the left side have almost the same content. The iconography of *The Dutch Garden* or *The Dutch Lion* must have provided the Dutch with a visual expression of their hostility against the Spaniards and strongly raised their patriotic spirit before their independence from Spain.

Even during the comparatively peaceful period during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621) concluded between Spain and the Dutch Republic, the popularity of the iconography never declined. It is eloquently proved by a print designed by Willem Buytewech (1591/92–1624) in 1615 for a title page of a propaganda pamphlet (fig. 13). All the motifs represented on it emphasize how dangerous Spain is, and how urgently necessary it is to enhance a strong patriotic spirit among the Dutch.[17]

hollandia (The Dutch Maiden) is sitting on *de vrijheid stoel* (The Freedam Chair), under an arch. On this arch and the architrave on its both sides are inscribed *victoria* and *de bataafse heerschappij* (The Batavian Reign), respectively.[18] To a large gable set on them are attached the coat of arms of the House of Orange-Nassau in the center, and those of the seven Dutch provinces surrounding it. On both sides of the gable is written *Merkt de Wysheyt vermaert van Hollandsche huyshouwen en siet des luypaerts aert die*

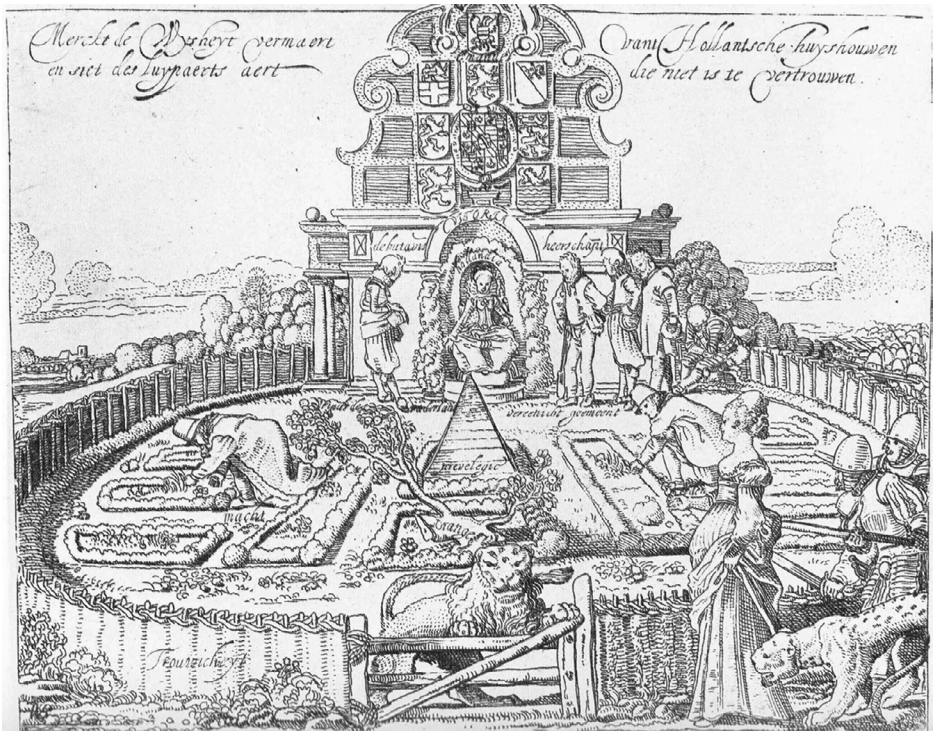

Fig. 13 Willem Pietersz Buytewech, *The Dutch Garden*, ca.1615, etching, engraving and drypoint, 14.5 x 18.4 cm, Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam.

niet is te vertrouwen (Remark the prestigious wisdom of the Dutch household and be watchful to the incredible temper of the leopard). On the left and right side of *hollandia* are standing *de Vrindt des Vaderlands* (the Friends of the Fatherland) and *de vereenicht gemeente* (the United Community), respectively. In the garden before *hollandia*, *macht* and *redden* (Power and Reason) are eagerly weeding, and between them there stands a pyramid inscribed with *preveledgie* (Privilege). The branches of a tree before the pyramid, inscribed with *orange* on its trunk, symbolize the three successive powerful stadholders, Willem the Silent (1544–84), Maurits (1585–1625) and Frederick Hendrick (1625–1647), appointed from the House of Orange-Nassau. A lion with many eyes on its head, surely representing *The Dutch Lion*, is carefully watching the entrance to the garden. On the hedge on the left side is seen a word, *Trouwicheyt* (Trust). In the foreground, a group of soldiers comes into the scene from the right side with a beautiful woman at the head. Her ugly backside face must imply her evil intention, which is clearly embodied by a leopard accompanying her, mentioned in the inscription above. The woman undoubtedly represents Spain, while the soldiers the Spaniards, both of whom should be dispelled from the Dutch territory. The Garden seems to be kept in a peaceful state for the time being, as is known by a sleeping armored warrior behind three men in the background, who symbolizes the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621). The message of the pamphlet is clear: be careful! The menace of Spain could always be sneaking up to Holland, even in the middle of the Truce. *The Dutch Garden*, *The Dutch Maiden*, and *The Dutch Lion* are allegorically, but realistically represented in a genre-like scene.

Even after the threat of Spain was no longer critical, the iconographies related to *The Dutch Garden* were not forgot. It was rather consciously accepted after the expire of the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain, because, as Simon Schama indicates, the self-awareness of the Dutch Republic as a nation gradually increased thereafter and various attempts were done to strengthen the patriotic spirit among the Dutch, by finding the origin of the Dutch Republic in the ancient period and newly editing Dutch Chronicles, to cite just a few examples.[19] *The Dutch Garden*, *The Dutch Maiden*, and *The Dutch Lion* ornamenting various public buildings could also be included among such instances.

Onto the gable facing to the north courtyard of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, a sculptor, Jan Gijseling the elder, carved a relief representing *The Dutch Lion*, based on Jan de Brij's (1597–1664) design (1661), when it was rebuilt in 1661 (figs. 14 and 15). In the center of the gable, *The Dutch Lion* stands on its hind legs, being surrounded by the hedge and holding two crossing anchors, the coat of arms of the city, Amsterdam, instead of his usual traditional attribute, the seven arrows, which represent the unification of the seven provinces. Undoubtedly, it is a variation of *The Dutch Garden*, being possibly named *de Amsterdamse Tuin* (*The Amsterdam Garden*). In this relief, Amsterdam, like the Dutch Republic, was expected to prosper and extend its power beyond the oceans, being assisted by Mars with a sword and a torch, and the Justice with a sword and a scale on the right and left side of the garden, respectively. A cock and a cross-staff between them suggest the support offered by Mercury: the former, which was believed to receive a divine inspiration at dawn from the planet Mercury, became an attribute of Mercury, while the latter, an indispensable astronomical tool to explore the trade beyond the oceans, represents an aspect of Mercury as the God of commerce. The sea gods, like Neptune and Triton put in the left and right side edge of the gable, would also symbolize overseas activities of Amsterdam.

This choice of the subject for the gable ornamentation of the Admiralty of Amsterdam shows us that the iconography of *The Dutch Garden* or *The Dutch Lion,* and probably *The Dutch Maiden* also, could be flexibly employed by various Dutch organizations to pry and praise their prosperity and that of the cities related to them, while each time changing the attributes and adding new ones corresponding to their character, but always suggesting the hope for peace and prosperity of the fatherland.[20] After the menace of Spain had reduced, *The Dutch Garden* and the iconographies related to it played a role to tie the national and public interests to each other through the patriotic spirit. Interestingly, as Simon Schama indicates, the Dutch family household or home was considered to be a microcosm of properly governed commonwealth at the time.[21] The public and private world certainly shared interests including the patriotism in the Dutch Republic. It means that the genre paintings representing Dutch everyday life could be expected as a place expressing the patriotic spirit. Herein could be found a possibility to interpret some Dutch genre paintings as a variation of *The Dutch Garden* or iconographies related to it.

3. Genre Paintings as a Variation of *The Dutch Garden* or *The Dutch Maiden*

Pieter de Hooch (fig. 16) often painted the scenes of a home garden, among which there are some possibly related to *The Dutch Garden* and *The Dutch Maiden*.[22] In the work owned by the National Gallery in London, a landlady is standing in a garden with her back turned to us and probably giving directions to her maidservant, while the latter is

Fig. 14 Jan Gijseling, *The Dutch Lion*, 1662, the stone relief, the gable facing to the north courtyard of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Fig. 15 Jan de Brij, Design for fig. 14, City Archives, Amsterdam.

squatting down by a water supply and scooping up a fish on a dish. She might just have finished sweeping the garden because it is in an utmost clean state. A broom leaning against the white wall at her side must suggest it. The narrow drain running obliquely on the bricked ground from the house on the right side to the unseen hedge on the left side, too, teaches the viewer that the domestic space is now saved from dirt. To manage the household properly and to control a maidservant in a right way were among the important virtues required from a housewife and they could allegorically be connected to those of the nation at the time. A Dutch home garden, usually located on the backside of a house, has been called *hof*, that is, courtyard, which has formed a secluded space together with the courtyards of the neighboring houses. De Hooch's landlady is thus standing in a closed space like the Virgin Mary in the Closed Garden and easily reminds us of *The Dutch Maiden*, while the scene itself would be reminiscent of *The Dutch Garden*.

This lovely scene with domestic daily activities, protected against the danger coming from the outside, literally represents the peacefulness of a private life the Dutch enjoyed at the time, but, at the same time, suggests that of the Dutch Republic in a disguised manner, and must have raised the patriotic spirit among the new rich citizens, from which possible purchasers of the painting would have been expected. A man coming forward and an open door in front of him would have been helpful in warning the viewer that the threshold between inside and outside the garden should be easily vulnerable.

The Maternal Care (1669) by Caspar Netscher (1639–1684) is possibly another variation of *The Dutch Maiden* (fig. 17). In a room, a mother is combing the hair of one of two children. He has just stopped playing with his toys such as a mini-windmill and a spin scattering on the ground, while another child is still enjoying seeing in the mirror

Fig. 16 Pieter de Hooch, *Courtyard with Lady and Serving Maid*, ca.1660–1661 or 1663, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 62.6 cm, National Gallery, London.

the reflected image of his face with his tongue sticking out. The painting is usually interpreted as an image emphasizing the importance of education: combing was understood at the time as an action not only to set someone's hair literally, but also to cultivate and purify the inside of a head, that is, educate someone, allegorically. The child not cared by the mother continues to fool about, while the one leaning against her lap and letting her comb his hair is apparently obedient to and educated by her.[23] It is probably not by chance to find in the background a maid with the water jug on a flat dish, the combination of which has often been seen in the scene of the annunciation and emphasized the chastity. Her existence behind the mother and the obedient child suggests an action of purifying in order to distill the indispensable knowledge from someone's brain, in short, the very purpose of education.[24] The combination of the two figures, one leaning on the other's lap, too, easily reminds us of an iconography, the Virgin and a Unicorn, which is, in turn, associated with *The Dutch Maiden* with *The Dutch Lion*.

The first phase of education for children was thought to be a maternal task at the time. Johannes de Swaef (1594–1653), a Dutch pedagogue, writes: "Here this has to be heeded/ for it is the duty of the male sex to serve in all important positions, in the Republic as well as in the Community/ as well as such duties that benefit the family. On the other hand, the female sex is charged with a more general calling, namely the supervision of their children and their household to see that the children are well taken care of and that everything in the house goes properly."[25] The strict gender-based division of works should have been kept: the social and public ones were saved for men, while the domestic and private ones were trusted to women. When women devoted themselves to these works, they were praised as being virtuous and, consequently, thought to greatly contribute to the nation. As an author of a popular manual on housekeeping management from the eighteenth century writes, the art of household was the very foundation of the prosperity of the fatherland.[26] The woman caring for the child in a closed space depicted by Netscher could thus be understood as a secularized *Dutch Maiden*.

Some paintings by Johannes Vermeer could be understood in the same way. In *A Woman in Blue* (fig. 18) executed around 1662–1665, a young woman is standing in a sunlit interior. She takes a blue jacket on, shows us her profile and is absorbed in reading a letter. Surprisingly, Vermeer constructed the composition and expressed the psychological nuance of the women, by using the tone variation of only three colors, blue, yellow and white.[27] On the wall, just on her right side, is hanging a large map covering the province of Holland. It correctly represents a copy of the map issued in 1620 by Willem Jansz. Blaeu (1571–1638, fig. 19) .[28] In an earlier painting, Vermeer hung the same map on the back wall, though being small in size and richer in coloration.[29] This time, he represented the map in the tone variation of a dark yellow and enlarged it as to locate the woman's head and bust before it.[30] The interplay of various curving lines on the map show extremely complicated patterns, as if they embodied various invisible thoughts and emotion the woman experienced while reading. The Dutch map and the woman are thus inseparably interlocked in the painting. A chair on her right side, a desk with a dark volume of cloth on her front side, and a chair on this side lock her from the other three sides, too. This woman standing in a closed space and deeply related to the province of Holland could be connected to none other than *The Dutch Maiden*, though the place occupied by her is not an open air garden, but an indoor room.

Fig. 17 Caspar Netscher, *The Maternal Care*, 1669, oil on panel, 44.5 x 38 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

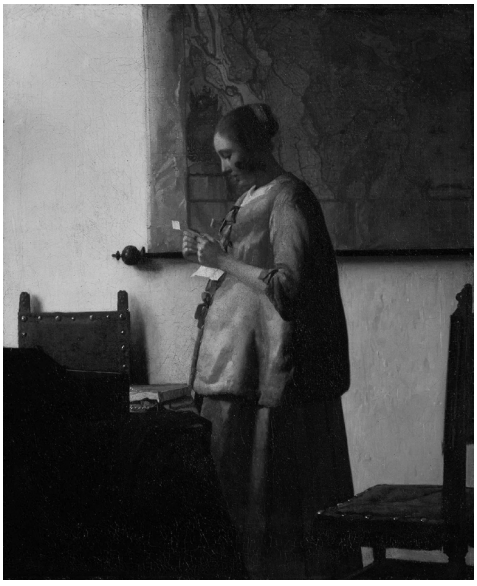

Fig. 18 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman in Blue*, ca.1662–1665, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 39.1 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

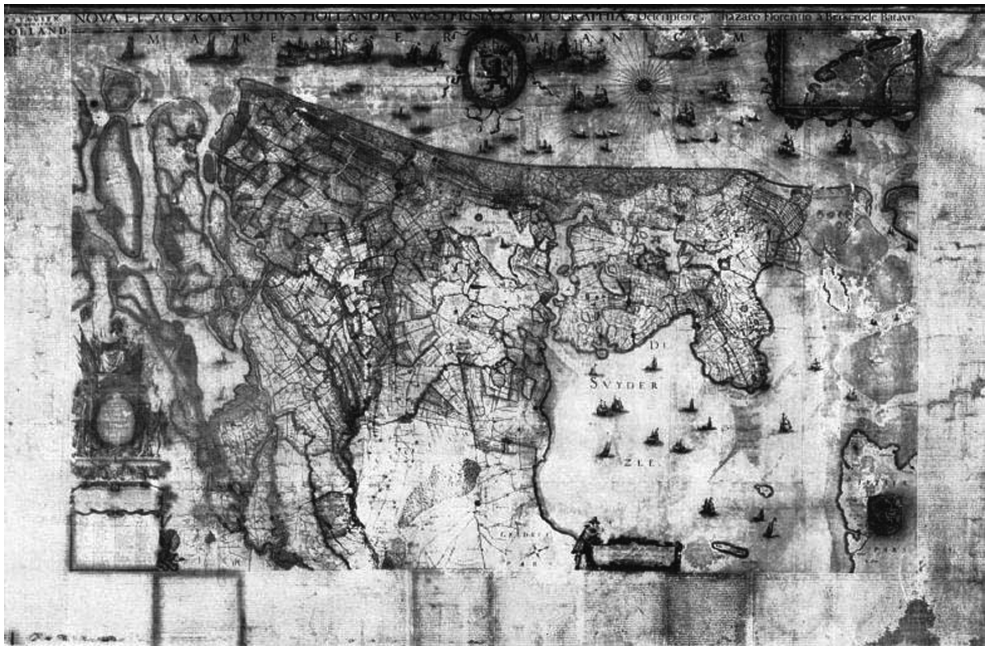

Fig. 19 Balthasar Florisz. van Berckenrode, *Wall Map of the Province of Holland*, published by Willem Jansz. Blaeu, 1644, Westvries Museum, Hoorn (originally published in 1620).

The map on the back wall could support this interpretation of the woman as a variation of *The Dutch Maiden* and the scene as *The Dutch Garden*. As is known, Leo Belgicus (fig. 20), a type of map showing the Northern and Southern Netherlands in a shape of lion sitting on his hind legs, was first issued in 1583 during the independent war against Spain, and again in 1609 by Claes Jansz Visscher (1587–1652) to commemorate the conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce signed by Holland and Spain.[31] It's apparently a version of *The Dutch Lion* in the form of map. The garden where the lion is sitting represents a lovely green field where the God of war is sleeping (in the lower right hand corner), two women representing the Southern and Northern Netherlands are talking to each other, with the allegorical figure implying their past conflict under their feet, peasants are working on the field, business men are trading, and travelers are riding, with a prosperous city in the background. What surrounds this field are the coats of arms of the seventeen provinces and the views of the twenty main cities located in the Netherlands in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

In 1648, *Leo Hollandicus* (fig. 21), another type of lion-shaped map, was published again by Claes Jansz Visscher, surely to celebrate the ratification of the Treaty of Münster, through which the independence of the Dutch Republic was definitely authenticated.[32] What is shown in the map, is only the province of Holland which played the major role in the Republic politically as well as economically. Therefore, the garden where the lion is standing on his hind legs consists of the North Sea with sailing ships and the coastal areas facing to it, and is surrounded by the residents therein from the working and higher class, the views of twelve cities belonging to the province including Delft, where Vermeer was active, and the coats of arms of thirty two cities. The deep consciousness and great pride of the province of Holland, which prospered the most among the Dutch seven provinces and kept the hegemony of the Republic, must have been much charged in the production of this map.

A map has been produced not just to chart geographical details, but also to imply a political purpose. The map of the province of Holland published by Blaue and represented in *A Woman in Blue* by Vermeer (fig. 18) is not lion-shaped, but shows *The Dutch Lion* as the coat of arms of the province on its upper center. The then viewers, therefore, easily recalled patriotic maps such as *Leo Hollandicus,* which had recently been launched. The lion-shaped top end of the two chairs' stiles in *A Woman in Blue* could have been helpful in this association of thinking. The painting must have attracted the then-market not only through the realistic representation of a simple daily scene with a woman reading a letter, but also through the spirit of the national identity especially strongly supported by the province of Holland, and the quiet virtuous domestic life backing up the Republic as its microcosm.[33]

To close my discussion, I cite an emblem (fig. 22) from *Sinnepoppen* (1614) published by Roemer Visscher (1547–1620): its motto, "Afkomst seyt niet", means 'pedigree counts for nothing', while the image attached to it represents a hand holding a brush.[34] In the commentarial text is explained the combination of the motto and the image as follows: 'pedigree is no help for the business during a war; consider a brush which could brush off dust, although being made with the dirty hairs of a hog; its usefulness never derives from the parents of the hog'. The idea might have derived from Visscher's own experience as a businessman who had lost his cargo during the war against Spain. It must have been one of the departing points for him to smoothly link a daily activity with a social incident. Simon Schama further amplifies this interpretation in his book, *The Embarassement of Riches*, by proposing a possible

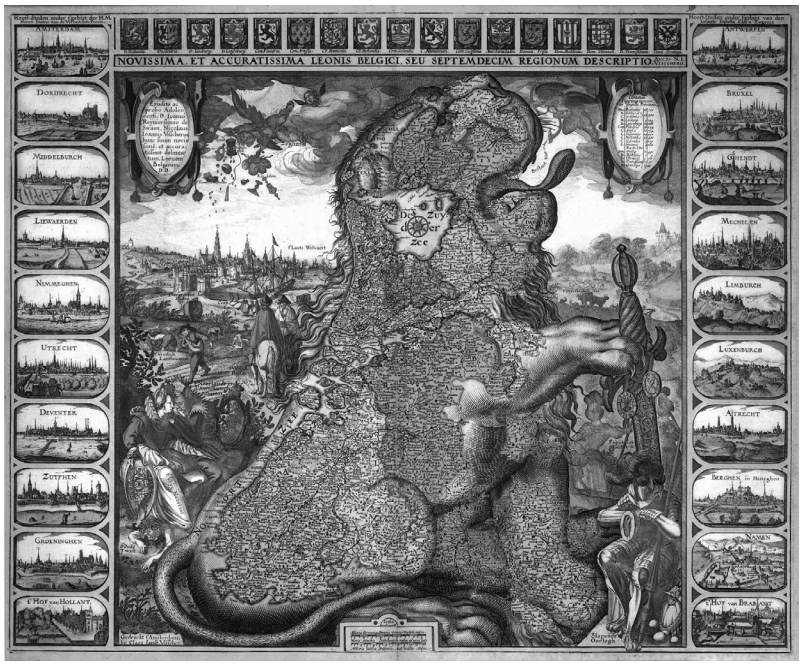

Fig. 20 Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Leo Belgicus*, 1609, engraving, 47 x 57.3 cm, Atlas van Stolk, Historisch Museum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 21 Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Leo Hollandicus*, 1648, engraving, 46 x 55 cm, Atlas van Stolk, Historisch Museum, Rotterdam.

Fig. 22 'Afkomst seyt niet', from Roemer Visscher, *Sinne Poppen*, Amsterdam, 1614.

deeper reading of the emblem: the excessive predilection for cleanliness of the Dutch, who have exhaustively brushed off dust and kept their home neatly and cleanly as reported by various foreign travelers, could be compared to their Protestant antipathy against Spain, the Roman Catholic country, which was believed to bring in various contaminations to the Republic.[35] A private domestic life enjoyed in a clean Dutch home thus overlaps with the patriotic spirit defending the Republic against the foreign menace, which is none other than what the iconography of *The Dutch Garden* visualizes. That's why Schama points out, citing Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647), a physician, publisher and the author of *Van De Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts* (1643), that the home was of supreme importance in determining the moral fate, both of individuals and of Dutch society as a whole.[36] While the ethos of a seventeenth-century state was usually formed around the aura of a dynasty, or the privileges historically assigned to a city, in the Netherlands it was the family household that was 'the fountain and source' of authority'. Schama convincingly advocates how the public and private world intertwined with each other in the Republic.[37] A broom leaning against the wall in the de Hooch's painting is just a cleaning utensil, but at the same time, a bridge between the private and public space through its function, cleaning.[38]

As I mentioned earlier, Holland managed to get over the difficulties caused by the first Anglo-Dutch War from 1652 to 1654 thanks to the high political ability of Johan de Wit. However, the menace coming from surrounding countries didn't cease to exist: England was still a dangerous threat to the Republic and both countries would go to war twice more during the 1660s and 1670s. France was gradually becoming a serious menace

to the safety of the Republic and at last invaded the Republic in 1672, delivering the coup de grace to it. Under this unsteady diplomatic state, *The Dutch Garden* and the iconographies related to it must have continued to be remarked by the Dutch, including genre painters and their purchasers, though being disguised in a realistic genre scene.

Notes

1 I wish to express my thanks to professors Toshiharu Nakamura and Kayo Hirakawa for offering me a chance to contribute to this volume. I am also grateful to the other contributors to it for giving me various inspiring suggestions.

2 The prehistory of genre paintings is briefly summarized in Peter C. Sutton, "Einleitung: Meister holländischer Genremalerei," Peter C. Sutton *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Von Frans Hals bis Vermeer*, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesizt, Berlin *et al*., 1984, pp. 9–57, especially pp. 23–24.

3 For Dutch genre paintings of the seventeenth century, see Sutton, *op. cit*. (note 2) and Wyne Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, New Haven and London, 2004.

4 Franits, *op. cit*. (note 3).

5 For the Dutch history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries I mainly refer to Mutsuro Imakita (ed.), *The History of the Middle Europe*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 272–310.

6 Franits, *op. cit*. (note 3), pp. 95–216.

7 For each of these painters, I mainly consulted the following exhibition catalogues: Arthur K. Wheelock *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Gerard ter Borch*, National Gallery of Art, Washington *et al*., 2004–2005; Adriaan E. Waiboer *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Gabriel Metsu*, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin *et al*., 2010–2011; Peter C. Sutton (ed.), exh. cat. *Pieter de Hooch, 1629–1684*, Dulwich Picture Gallery *et al*., 1998; Walter Liedtke *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Vermeer and the Delft School*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York *et al*., 2001; Quentin Buvelot *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Frans van Mieris 1635–1681*, Mauritshuis, The Hague *et al*., 2005.

8 Imakita, *op. cit*. (note5).

9 For *The Dutch Garden* and the iconographies related to it, see Pieter Jan van Winter, "De Hollandse Tuin," *Nederlands Kunsthistorish Jaarboek*, 8, 1975, pp. 29–121.

10 *Ibid*., pp. 61–79.

11 Hans Biederman, *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole*, Koichi Fujishiro *et al*. (trans.), Tokyo, p. 32.

12 Otto Seel, *Der Physiologus: Tiere und ihre Symbolik*, Munich, 1967, p. 22.

13 Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, London, 1987, p. 69.

14 Van Winter, *op. cit*. (note 9).

15 For the basic information on this print, see the concerned part of Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Collection Database (https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-77.682. Access: 28/2/2015).

16 The inscribed Dutch poem is as follows:
"Houdt op in mijn thuyn te wroeten, Spaenshe deeren/
wilt uwen varkenscop toch achterwaerts trecken/
oft mijn Guesche Cudse salt u soo verleeren
die u thooft sal breken/oft den hals doen recken:
den edelen prince daer ghy meed' woudt ghecken/
sal u te water/en land' bespringhen//all:
vertreckt met u vuyl soghen/en jonghe specken/
loop guyten loop/oft Geux u daertoe dwingenl/sall."

17 For the basic information on this print, see the concerned part of Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Collection Database (http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.38257 Access: 28/2/2015).

18 For the detailed description, I referred to Egbert Haverkamp-Begeman (ed.), exh. cat. *Willem Buytewech 1591–1624*, Boymans-Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam et al., 1975, pp. 95–96.

19 Schama, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 51–125.

20 There are two interesting stained glasses illustrated with *The Dutch Maiden* in *The Dutch Garden*. The one produced around 1596–1597 is found in Sint Jans Kerk in Gouda, while the other around 1880 for De Grote Kerk in Haarlem. In both of them are sitting *The Maiden of Dortrecht* and *The Maiden of the Association of Industry* in *The Dutch Garden* in place of *The Dutch Maiden*. The latter is especially interesting, because the maiden holds the spindle, which must represent textile manufacture as well as the old tradition of feminine domestic activity, scenes of which were often painted by genre painters of the seventeenth century. For the information of these stained glasses, I deeply thank Dr. Zsuzsanna Zeeman van Ruyven, the specialist of Dutch stained glasses.

21 Schama, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 386.

22 For detailed information on this work, see Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch*, Oxford, 1980, cat. no. 44.

23 Eddy de Jongh et al. (ed.), exh. cat. *Tot Lering en Vermaak*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1976, pp. 196–199; Jacob Cats, *Spiegel van den ouden en nieuwen tyt*, The Hague, 1632, vol. 3, p. 147, XLV.

24 There are some early Netherlandish paintings depicting the Annunciation with the water jug on a plate somewhere in the background, which emphasizes the chastity of the Virgin.

25 Cited from Franits, *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, New York, 1993, p. 130

26 *De Ervarene en Verstandige Hollandische Huyshouder*. The citation is based on Schama, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 386.

27 For the detailed stylistic analysis, see Arthur K. Wheelock, *Vermeer and the Art of Painting*, New Haven & London, 1995, pp. 7–13.

28 James Welu, "Vermeer: His Cartographic Sources," *Art Bulletin*, 57, 1975, pp. 529–547.

29 *A Soldier and a Woman with a Laughing Girl* owned by the Frick Collection, New York.

30 Wheelock, *op. cit*. (note 27).

31 For Leo Belgicus, see H. A. M. van der Heijnden, *Leo Belgicus: An Illustrated and Annotated Carto- Bibliography*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1990.

32 For Leo Hollandicus, see *ibid*.

33 This author presented the same discussion in her book published in Japanese: Yoriko Kobayashi, *Cosmology of a Garden*, Tokyo, 2014, pp. 241–257, though described more compactly.

34 Roemer Visscher, *Sinne Poppen*, Amsterdam, 1614, XLVI.

35 Schama, *op. cit*. (note 13), pp. 378–381.

36 Schama, *op. cit*. (note 13), p. 386.

37 Schama, *op. cit*. (note 13), p. 386.

38 Eddy de Jongh, a Dutch Iconologue, severely criticizes the theory presented by Schama in his book, *Questions of Meaning: Theme and Motif in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painting*, Leiden, 1995, pp. 194, mentioning that the latter wholly accepts the cliché, the Dutch obsession on excessive cleanliness, reported by foreign visitors to the Dutch Republic, but neglects its real dirty state and too directly associates an action of cleaning and a utensil for it with the Calvinism. Although de Jongh always very carefully interprets Dutch genre paintings allegorically, the discussion given by Schama to connect the private and public world to each other would still be persuasive. A possibility to interpret some Dutch genre paintings as an expression of patriotic spirit could not be excluded.

Photo Credits and Sources

※ The internet sites mentioned below were all seen on April 4th, 2015.
Figs.1–2 (Peter C. Sutton *et al*. (ed.), exh. cat. *Von Frans Hals bis Vermeer*, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin *et al*, 1984, pp. 172, 315), fig. 3 (Albert Blankert *et al*., *Vermeer*, Meulenhoff, 1987, p. 84), figs. 4, 6 (Yoriko Kobayashi, *Vermeer: Life and Works*, Kyoto Shoseki, Tokyo, 2007, p. 56), figs. 5, 18 (Yoriko Kobayashi, *The Complete Works of Vermeer*, Shogakukan, Tokyo, 2012, cat. nos. 18, 14), fig. 7 (http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/items/NCRD01:152472908), fig. 8 (http://www.hubert-herald.nl/NederlandseLeeuw.htm), fig. 9 (http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/items/BVB01:MB1563DIPK), fig. 10 (http://resources21.kb.nl/gvn/NCRD01/NCRD01_123961009_X.JPG), fig. 11 (http://www.thecultureconcept.com/circle/unicorns-in-medieval-renaissance-art-on-show-at-new-york), fig. 12 (Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen*, Amsterdam, 1863–82, vol.1, p.93), fig. 13 (Yoriko Kobayashi, *Cosmology of a Garden*, Seidosha, Tokyo, 2014, fig. 132), fig. 14 (http://www.klaasschoof.com/amst1p4p4.html), fig. 15 (City Archives, Amsterdam), fig. 16 (Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch 1629–1684*, New Haven & London, 1998, p. 35), fig. 17 (Eddy de Jongh, ed., exh.cat. *Tot Lering en Vermaak*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1976, p. 196), fig. 19 (Ton Brandenbang *et al*., *The Scholarly World of Vermeer*, Zwolle, 1996, p. 62), figs. 20–21 (Ariane Van Suchtelen and Arthur K. Wheelock, ed., exh.cat. *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, Mauritshuis, The Hague *et al*., 2008–2009, figs. 12–13), fig. 22 (The reprint edition in 1949 of Roemer Visscher, *Sinne Poppen*, Amsterdam, 1614, XLVI).